On Good Friday

By

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Theological Summary

In “On Good Friday,” Holland reflects on Jesus’s crucifixion as the fullest expression of God’s unconditional love—love that both saves and calls believers to follow Jesus “the Way” here and now. The piece stresses that the cross cannot be separated from the life Jesus lived: a life of steadfast, self-giving love and a confrontation with domination systems in which religion can collaborate with empire to oppress and exploit. Drawing on the hymn “The Truth Sent from Above” and on Borg and Crossan’s account of Holy Week as a choice between competing “processions” and “journeys,” the reflection invites readers to die to complicity and be reborn into transformed, reconciled life. It closes with the Prayer Attributed to St. Francis as a petition for the dispositions needed to live this way of peace, pardon, and self-sacrificial love *(Microsoft Copilot)*.

On Good Friday

Today we witness the full measure of God's unconditional love for us. For today we witness Jesus's death on the cross, His death on the cross that we might live – have life in Him – here and now and have life everlasting. How can we not respond but by following Jesus on *the* Way? Yet, as we so witness Jesus's death on the cross, we must not forget that God's unconditional love for us was made known to us in the *Way* Jesus lived too. For, by what He did, He made known to us how to live, what it is to have life as one in Him at all, namely, to unconditionally love one another as He unconditionally loved and loves us.

To harken back to a hymn we sang at our celebration of His Incarnation, *The Truth Sent from Above:* "Thus in love to us he behaved, to show us how we must be saved. And if you want to know the *Way,* be pleased to hear what He did say."

In what Jesus did He made manifest what it is for us to love one another as HE loves us in His confrontation with the domination system of His day in which religion collaborated with empire in doing violence to oppress and exploit the Jewish people. And it was His confrontation with Rome's oppression and exploitation of the Jewish people as well as those locally who collaborated with Rome – at least in part, the high priests, etc. – that lead to His death on the cross to which we bear witness today.

Today we bear witness to the full measure of God's unconditional love for us in Jesus's death on the cross, death on the cross that we might live here and now and have life everlasting. How can we not respond to God's gift of Himself He gives us in Christ Jesus other than by following Jesus on *the Way – to confrontation with domination systems of our day that oppress and exploit the poor and marginalized, especially when religion is used to justify such oppression, exploitation, and marginalization* - the *Way* of life to be found as *one in Him* here and now – giving our *selves* to Him as He gave and gives Himself to us by our so giving our *selves* to each other?!? For, we must not forget, that accepting Jesus's gift of life here and now entails action on our part, action by which we *follow Him on the Way through death to resurrection – death to our complicit participation in the domination systems of our day, participation which separates us from God by separating us from each other, and rebirth to life by our overthrowing them, reconciling with each other and thereby reconciling with God that it might be on earth as it is in heaven!* With respect to this, in their book entitled *The Last Week* Borg and Crossan (2006) note:

> "Holy week, Good Friday, and Easter are about the conflict between the radicality of God and the normalcy of domination systems, which is the normalcy of civilization. Jesus's last week challenges the domination systems of this world even as it also invites us upon a journey through death to resurrection, journeying with the risen Jesus, the risen Christ.
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> … .
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> Holy Week and the journey of Lent are about an alternative procession and an alternative journey. The alternative procession is what we see on Palm Sunday, an anti-imperial and nonviolent procession. Now as then, that

> procession leads to a capital city, an imperial center, and a place of collaboration between religion and violence. Now as then, the alternative journey is the path of personal transformation that leads to journeying with the risen Jesus, just as it did for his followers on the road to Emmaus. Holy week as the annual remembrance of Jesus's last week presents us with the always relevant questions. Which journey are we on? Which procession are we in?" (pp. 215-216)

Today we bear witness to the full measure of God's unconditional love for us in Jesus's death on the cross, death on the cross that we might live here and now and have life everlasting. How can we not respond to gift of Himself He gives us in Christ Jesus other than by following Jesus on *the Way through death to resurrection to* the *Way* of life as *one in Him* here and now – sacrificing our *selves* to Him as He sacrificed and sacrifices Himself to us in Christ Jesus by our so sacrificing our *selves* to each other in our unconditionally loving each other as He unconditionally loves us?!? Let us, then, pray for those character traits, dispositions to choose in a particular way by means of which we might so respond:

A Prayer Attributed to St. Francis

May God make us instruments of His peace:
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, union;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much
Seek to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

BLESSINGS and PEACE to ALL!!!
+MWH

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Work Cited

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Microsoft Copilot. "Summary of 'On Good Friday.'" *Copilot in Microsoft Word*, 9 Apr. 2026.